

**'I was not a dictator': Mahathir**  
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight dismissed the label 'dictator' attached to his 22-year rule of the country saying that had he been one, governance of the nation would have been much easier.

Extrapolating at the 50th anniversary dinner of the Malaysian Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (Maicsa) in Kuala Lumpur, he noted that "... everybody seems to have rights in democracy which makes governance complicated otherwise it should be very easy".

"This makes things difficult. My 22 years started with all kinds of problems because of these rights. I've been called a dictator but it is not true.

mahathir speech at maicsa 100510 02 "If I have been a dictator, governance would be very easy. All I have to do is to issue a decree and nobody will complain," said Mahathir.

The sprightly octogenarian also defended his administration against the accusation of being 'totalitarian'.

"There is a lot of talk that actually we are not a democracy but we are totalitarian state. That we had the same party ruling ever since the independence.

But the criteria of a democracy is that it does not hinder the opposition from winning, he said.

"In 2008, they (the opposition) really won effectively to the point the federal government does not have a two-thirds majority. It is very much weaker.

"But we (the ruling government) must have a two-thirds majority so that we can govern a country without being hampered by the opposition too much.

"They (the opposition) will obstruct but they will not have the power to frustrate you completely.

'Plots to topple me'

Citing the constitutional amendments in 1993 as an example, Mahathir said:

"At the time, we needed to amend the constitution to free the people from the royal families or rather from a sultan.

mahathir speech at maicsa 100510 03 Having the privilege of a two-thirds majority keeps dissent at bay and allows governments to govern, claimed Mahathir further.

The country's fourth prime minister also revealed that his tenure was a tough one as result of all the 'plots' to topple him.

"There are so many people lined up against you everywhere and even within your own party [...] there will be people who are very anxious to take over and they will try all kinds of

gymnastics.

"There was a time I was nearly toppled. Unfortunately, I won by 43 votes so Tengku Razaleigh didn't get a chance to become prime minister".

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